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IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, was held at Geneva from 13 to 24 September 1993. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992, the Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the Assembly, annexed to the present note, the report on that session.

ANNEX

Report of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, on its second session

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I. OPENING AND DURATION OF THE SESSION

1. The second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, was held in Geneva from 13 to 24 September 1993. The session was convened in accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 entitled "Establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa". At its second session, the Committee held four plenary meetings (1st to 4th); 19 meetings of the two working groups and a number of informal meetings.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Election of officers

2. At the 2nd meeting, on 14 September, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Nikita F. Glazovsky (Russian Federation) as Rapporteur of the Committee to replace Mr. Sergei N. Morozov (Russian Federation), who was unable to continue his functions on the Bureau.

3. At the same meeting, the Committee also elected by acclamation Ms. Anne De Lattre (France) as Chairman of Working Group II to replace Mr. Jacques Alliot (France), who was unable to continue his functions on the Bureau.

4. At the 3rd meeting, on 20 September 1993, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. A. Ovchinnikov (Uzbekistan) as Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur of Working Group I.

5. The Bureau of the Committee and its Working Groups, as elected at its organizational, first and second sessions, was thus as follows:

Chairman: Mr. Bo Kjellén (Sweden)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. René Valéry Mongbe (Benin)
Mr. T. P. Sreenivasan (India)
Mr. José Urrutia (Peru)

Rapporteur: Mr. Nikita F. Glazovsky (Russian Federation)

Working Group I

Chairman: Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaf (Algeria)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Erwin Ortíz Gandarillas (Bolivia)

Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur: Mr. A. Ovchinnikov (Uzbekistan)

Working Group II

Chairman: Ms. Anne De Lattre (France)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Morad-Ali Ardeshiri (Islamic Republic of Iran)

Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur: Mr. Frederick E. G. Mallya (United Republic of Tanzania)

B. Adoption of the agenda

6. At its 1st meeting, on 13 September 1993, the Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. Election of officers

3. Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa

4. Review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds

   (a) Special Voluntary Fund to support the participation of developing countries affected by drought and desertification, particularly the least developed countries

   (b) Trust Fund for the negotiating process

5. Adoption of the provisional agenda for the third session

6. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its second session.

C. Attendance

7. Representatives of the following States attended the session: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Holy See, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Khazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain

and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

8. The following United Nations organs and bodies were represented: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Economic Commission for Africa and United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office.

9. The following specialized agencies were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

10. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: African Development Bank, Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, Arab Maghreb Union, Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Centre for Environment and Development, Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE), Commission of the European Communities, Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, League of Arab States, Organization of African Unity, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, Southern African Development Community and Southern African Regional Commission for the Conservation and Utilization of the Soil (SARCCUS).

11. The following national liberation movement was represented: Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

12. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Africa Harvest Mission, Association des Volontaires pour le Développment, Australian Council for Overseas Aid, Cercle International pour la Promotion de la Création, Comité nacional Pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora, Conference des Organisations non-governmentales d'Environment et de Développment de l'Afrique Centrale, Consejo Andino de Manejo Ecológico, Earthaction Network, Earthcare Africa Monitoring Institute, Enda Inter-Arabe, Environment Liaison Centre International, Environmentalist Society, Environment et Développment du Tiers-Monde, Friends of the Environment and Development Association, Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)/Quakers, Fundación Rio Parnaiba, Guamina, Guinée Ecologie, Institut de Recherche sur l'Environment, Instituto de Pre-Historia, Antropologia e Ecologia, International Academy of the Environment, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Federation of University Women, International Institute for Environment and Development, International Synergy Institute, International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, KENGO Kenya Energy and Environment Organizations, League for Pastoral Peoples, Les Amis de la Terre-Togo, Lutheran World Federation, One World Now, OXFAM, Platform for Sustainable Development, Sahel Defis: Développment Environment Formation Insertion Sociale, Société Algérienne pour le Droit de l'Environment, Society for Conservation and Protection of the Environment (SCOPE) Solagral, Solidarity Canada Sahel, Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC), Third World Network, Wilderness Society, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), World Conservation Union, World Federation of

United Nations Associations, World Vision International, World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA).

D. Documentation

13. The documents before the Committee at its second session are listed in appendix I to the present report.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Mandates for the Working Groups

14. At its 2nd meeting, on 14 September, the Committee considered the draft decision entitled "Mandates for the Working Groups", which had been transmitted to its second session for consideration by Committee decision 1/3. In presenting the draft decision to the Committee, the Chairman proposed that the word "definitions" be included in operative paragraph 1 (b) thereof.

15. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft decision, as orally amended (see appendix II, decision 2/1).

16. After the draft decision was adopted, the representative of Brazil made a statement.

B. Accreditation of non-governmental organizations

17. At its 1st and 3rd meetings, on 13 and 20 September, the Committee, bearing in mind paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 and rule 49 of the rules of procedure of the Committee (A/AC.241/3), decided to approve the accreditation of the non-governmental organizations listed in documents A/AC.241/9/Add.2 and Add.3 (see appendix II, decision 2/2).

C. Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Committee

18. At the 3rd meeting, on 20 September, the Committee, bearing in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/188 on the participation of observers in the work of the Committee in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly, decided to accord observer status in its work to the intergovernmental organizations listed in document A/AC.241/L.5/Add.1* and 2 (see appendix II, decision 2/3).

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* The Southern African Regional Commission for the Conservation and Utilization of the Soil (SARCCUS), an intergovernmental organization, appears in the list of non-governmental organizations that had requested accreditation at the last session of the Committee, and should be deleted from that list, which appears in appendix II, decision 1/1, of the report of the Committee on its first session (A/48/226).

IV. ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA

A. Reports of the Working Groups

19. At its 1st meeting, on 13 September 1993, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in accordance with its decision 2/1, allocated item 3 of its agenda, entitled "Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa" to the Working Groups.

1. Report of Working Group I

20. At the 4th meeting, on 24 September, the Vice-Chairman of Working Group I, Mr. Erwin Ortíz Gandarillas (Bolivia), introduced the report of Working Group I (A/AC.241/WG.I/L.1), as adopted.

21. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the report of Working Group I (see appendix III, sect. I).

2. Report of Working Group II

22. At the 4th meeting, on 24 September, the Chairman of Working Group II, Ms. Anne De Lattre (France), introduced the report of Working Group II (A/AC.241/WG.II/L.1), as adopted.

23. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the report of Working Group II (see appendix III, sect. II).

B. Action taken by the Committee

24. At the 4th meeting, on 24 September, the Chairman introduced a draft decision (A/AC.241/L.14) and orally revised it as follows:

(a) The words "particularly in Africa" were added at the end of the third preambular paragraph;

(b) The third preambular paragraph of the annex which read:

> "Recognizing that desertification and/or drought affects all continents and is thus a problem of global dimension and that concrete measures have to be taken in all regions, particularly in Africa, within the framework of the Convention,"

was replaced by the following:

"Recalling that Agenda 21, chapter 12, in particular paragraphs 12.1-4, recognizes desertification and/or drought as a problem of global dimension, in that it affects one sixth of the world population and one quarter of the total land area of the world and requires a broad response, as set out in paragraph 12.4 of Agenda 21, and that concrete measures have to be taken in all regions, particularly in Africa, within the framework of the Convention,";

(c) In operative paragraph 10 of the annex to the draft decision, the words ", as appropriate," were inserted before the words "the scientific and industrial communities".

25. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft decision, as orally revised (see appendix II, decision 2/4).

26. Before the draft decision was adopted, the representative of Egypt made a statement.

27. After the draft decision was adopted, statements were made by the representatives of Australia (on behalf of the Western European and Other States Group), Colombia (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77), the United States of America, Belgium (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Community), the Russian Federation (on behalf of the Eastern European States Group), Kenya (on behalf of the African States Group), Japan, India and El Salvador (on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States Group).

V. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

28. At its 3rd meeting, on 20 September 1993, the Committee considered agenda item 4 entitled "Review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds". For its discussion of the item, the Committee had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds (A/AC.241/13).

29. The Executive Secretary made an opening statement in which he presented an account of the voluntary contributions made to both the Special Voluntary Fund for Developing Countries Participation and the Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities. Some delegations made comments or sought further clarification on the utilization of the resources available to the Secretariat.

30. In concluding the discussions, the Chairman of the Committee urged Member States to contribute effectively to the Funds so as to enable the Secretariat to undertake the activities envisaged in an efficient and timely way.

VI. ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRD SESSION

31. At its 4th meeting, on 24 September, the Committee decided to approve the draft provisional agenda for its third session (see appendix II, decision 2/5).

VII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

32. At its 4th meeting, on 24 September, the Committee adopted the draft report on its second session, as contained in document A/AC.241/L.13, and authorized the Rapporteur to finalize it by incorporating therein the proceedings of the 3rd and 4th meetings.

APPENDIX I

List of documents before the Committee at its second session

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
A/AC.241/9/Add.2 and 3	1	List of non-governmental organizations recommended for accreditation
A/AC.241/11	1	Provisional agenda for the second session
A/AC.241/12	3	Note by the Secretariat containing a compilation of government views, statements and drafting proposals
A/AC.241/13	4	Review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds
A/AC.241/L.5/Add.1 and 2	1	Note by the Secretariat on the participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Committee
A/AC.241/L.11	1	Programme of work for the second session
A/AC.241/L.12	3	Draft decision submitted by the Chairman on the future work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
A/AC.241/L.13	6	Draft report of the Committee on its second session
A/AC.241/L.14	3	Draft decision submitted by the Chairman
A/AC.241/CRP.3	3	Non-paper submitted by the Chairman on modalities for the negotiation of regional instruments
A/AC.241/CRP.4	3	Introductory remarks by the Chairman
A/AC.241/WG.I/L.1	3	Draft report of Working Group I
A/AC.241/WG.II/L.1	3	Draft report of Working Group II

APPENDIX II

Decisions adopted by the Committee at its second session

Decision 2/1

Mandates for the Working Groups

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee,

Recognizing that the problems related to desertification are complex and wide-ranging and that the sections of Agenda 21 a/ concerning social and economic dimensions, strengthening the role of major groups, and means of implementation, provide an essential background to the work of the Committee,

Recognizing also that section 2 of Agenda 21 on conservation and management of resources for development, and in particular chapter 12, on combating desertification and drought, will have a direct impact on the formulation of the Convention,

Recognizing also that desertification affects all continents and that concrete measures have to be taken in all regions within the framework of this convention; such action has to be taken in a prompt and efficient manner and the negotiation should be organized in a way which would ensure this,

Mindful of the fact that these different elements have to be considered in the light of General Assembly resolution 47/188, which states that the convention should be concluded by June 1994,

Recognizing that the short time available for the negotiation requires simple and flexible mandates for the two Working Groups,

1. Decides that the Working Groups will have the following mandates, it being understood that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee may amend this decision, if the management of the negotiations so requires:

(a) Working Group I is responsible for the elaboration of such provisions as the preamble, principles, objectives and commitments; including financial arrangements and capacity-building;

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a/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

(b) Working Group II is responsible for the elaboration of such provisions as definitions; institutional, administrative, technological and scientific aspects; research, data collection and exchange of information; procedural arrangements and other legal provisions such as any instruments related to the convention;

(c) General Assembly resolution 47/188, and the official name of the Negotiating Committee, containing the expression "particularly in Africa", indicate that priority action should be taken in Africa. An instrument on Africa should therefore be negotiated once the main structure of the convention has been defined, and adopted as an integral part of the convention. Similar instruments for other regions will be negotiated without delay, according to modalities to be decided by the Committee at its second session;

2. Decides further that:

(a) To ensure day-to-day compatibility and coordination between the two Working Groups, the Chairman of one Working Group shall participate ex officio in the Bureau of the other Working Group;

(b) The Plenary and the two Working Groups shall organize their work in such a way that not more than two meetings are held within the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at the same time;

(c) The two Working Groups should, if possible, complete their work by March 1994, during the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at Geneva, in order to allow the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, at its fifth session, to finalize negotiations on the basis of a consolidated text.

Decision 2/2

Accreditation of non-governmental organizations

At the 1st and 3rd meetings, on 13 and 20 September, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, bearing in mind paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 and rule 49 of the rules of procedure of the Committee (A/AC.241/3), decided to approve the accreditation of the following non-governmental organizations:

ADRINOK/Centre d'Appui au Développement Rural Intégré du Nord-Kivu
Agro-Galliness Farm
Al Nasser Ladies Center
Amigos de la Tierra (Friends of the Earth - Spain)
Asociacion de Derecho Ambiental de la Region Inka
Asociacion los Algarrobos
Association Malienne des Amis du Sahel
Association Malienne pour la Conservation de la Faune et de son Environnement "AMCFE"
Association Nationale "IBN-AL-AWAM"
Association pour le Développement et la Formation des Jeunes et des Femmes sur l'Environnement

Bohumukhi Milon Shangha
Brain-Trust of Budlet Community
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
Centro Andino de Investigacion y Desarrollo
Comité Français Contre la Faim
Conservatoire et Jardin Botanique des Mascarin
Development Group
Earth Search
Earthcare Africa Monitoring Institute
Environment Protection Association of Ghana
Friends of the Environment and Development Association
Fundação Grupo Esquel Brasil
Good Social Work Centre
Green Environment Movement
Guinée Ecologie
Haribon Foundation
INAFORM
International Academy of the Environment
International Organization for World Peace, Disarmament, Development and World Human Rights
International Synergy Institute
Kelansar Vikas Samiti (KVS)
League for Pastoral Peoples
Lutheran World Federation
Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation
Mouvement Ecologique Algerien (MEA)
Natural Heritage Institute
Ngara District Development Organisation
Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team (NEST)
One World Now
Orissa State Volunteers and Social Workers Association
Organisation d'Aide au Developpement
Partnership Management and Support Program
REDES Friends of the Earth - Uruguay
Reseau d'Appui aux Initiatives Communautaires
SAILD
SIYOTANKA
Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental
Societe Algerienne pour le Droit de l'Environnement
Solidarité pour le Sahel (SOLISA)
Sri Lanka Environment Congress
St. Xavier's Social Service Society
Synergos Institute Inc.
Tarime Rural Development Trust Fund (TARDTF)
United Club
United Nations Association in Canada
Wilderness Society
World Council of Churches
World Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations
World Federation of United Nations Associations
World Resources Institute
Young Women's Christian Association

Decision 2/3

Participation of observers

At its 3rd meeting, on 20 September, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, bearing in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 on the participation of observers in the work of the Committee in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly, decided to accord observer status in its work to the following intergovernmental organizations:

Centre for Environment and Development Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE)
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research/International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (CGIAR/ICRISAT)
Southern African Regional Commission for the Conservation and Utilization of Soil (SARCCUS)

Decision 2/4

Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992, establishing the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, with a view to finalizing such a convention by June 1994,

Recalling also decision 2/1 adopted by the Committee on 13 September 1993, in particular para 1.c thereof,

Recognizing that, in view of the global dimension and the complexity of the problems relating to desertification and/or drought and of the particular conditions affecting each region, including regions other than Africa, an effective Convention should deal with the specific needs of each region, particularly in Africa,

1. Decides to recommend for adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session the draft resolution contained in the annex to the present text;

2. Decides also to establish, at its third session, a programme of work for the final stages of the negotiation, including the elaboration of regional instruments, in conformity with decision 2/1, and the adoption of a decision on interim arrangements for the period leading up to the first session of the Conference of the parties;

3. Requests the Secretariat to continue to support the preparation of a regional instrument on Africa and similar instruments for Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to take into account other affected regions;

4. Requests the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to report to the General Assembly on the progress of the negotiations.

Annex

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/172 of 19 December 1989, 44/228 of 22 December 1989 and other relevant General Assembly resolutions, as well as decisions adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular the recommendation by which the Conference invited the General Assembly to establish, under its auspices, an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa,

Recalling its resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 by which it established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, with a view to finalizing such a convention by June 1994,

Recalling that Agenda 21, chapter 12, in particular paragraphs 12.1-4, recognizes desertification and/or drought as a problem of global dimension, in that it affects one sixth of the world population and one quarter of the total land area of the world and requires a broad response, as set out in paragraph 12.4 of Agenda 21, and that concrete measures have to be taken in all regions, particularly in Africa, within the framework of the convention,

Reiterating the objective that the convention be finalized by June 1994, and that it shall be implemented as soon as possible,

Taking note with appreciation of the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its first and second substantive sessions,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General concerning the progress of the negotiations on the convention,

1. Urges the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to successfully complete the negotiations by June 1994, in accordance with resolution 47/188;

2. Decides that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee shall hold one session after the adoption of the convention in order to review the situation in the interim period pending the entry into force of the convention, in particular with regard to the implementation of provisions adapted to the specific needs of each region;

3. Further decides that the session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee after the adoption of the convention, should be held not later than 31 January 1995; and requests the Secretary-General to make appropriate arrangements for the functioning of the ad hoc secretariat and the multidisciplinary panel of experts to service that session;

4. Also decides that the negotiating process shall continue to be funded through existing United Nations budgetary resources, without negatively affecting its programmed activities, and through voluntary contributions to the trust fund established pursuant to its resolution 47/188 specifically for that purpose for the duration of the negotiations and administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat under the authority of the Secretary-General, with the possibility of carrying over resources contributed from one fiscal year to the other;

5. Takes note of the contributions of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other relevant international organizations dealing with desertification, drought and development to the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in the conduct of its mandate and invites them to continue to provide such support;

6. Takes note with appreciation of the initial contributions made to the trust fund and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to continue their support for the fund;

7. Invites the international community, in particular the developed countries, and other countries in a position to do so, to make voluntary contributions to the Committee secretariat and/or the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office of the United Nations Development Programme and any other relevant international and regional organizations to allow them to assist countries affected by drought and/or desertification in all regions, particularly in Africa, in their preparation for the negotiating process;

8. Takes note with appreciation of the contributions made to the special voluntary fund established pursuant to its resolution 47/188 to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiation process, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to continue to contribute generously to this fund;

9. Further takes note of the arrangements made by the Secretary-General and of the welcome support of relevant or interested organizations, organs, programmes and concerned agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental, subregional and regional organizations in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and invites them to continue to

participate actively in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in the future;

10. Urges Governments to continue to organize, in close collaboration with the regional commissions and national, subregional and regional organizations, activities to support the process of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, involving, as appropriate, the scientific and industrial communities, trade unions, the relevant non-governmental organizations and other interested groups;

11. Takes note of the assistance provided by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office to the countries covered under its mandate in their preparations for and participation in the negotiating process and invites the Office to continue to support the Governments concerned and to continue to mobilize resources for this purpose;

12. Further takes note of the constructive contribution of relevant non-governmental organizations to the success of the negotiating process, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and taking into account procedures used in the process of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and encourages them and particularly non-governmental organizations from developing countries, to continue to contribute to the success of the negotiating process;

13. Reiterates its request to the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to continue to submit progress reports on the negotiations to the Commission on Sustainable Development and other appropriate bodies;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, scientific and other institutions concerned;

15. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

16. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session a sub-item entitled "Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa" under an agenda item entitled "Implementation of decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development".

* * *

Decision 2/5

Provisional agenda for the third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee

At its 4th meeting, on 24 September, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee approved the following provisional agenda for its third session:

1. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

2. Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa.

3. Review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds:

   (a) Special Voluntary Fund to support the participation of developing countries affected by drought and desertification, particularly the least developed countries;

   (b) Trust Fund for the negotiating process.

4. Adoption of the provisional agenda for the fourth session and organization of work for the final stages of negotiations.

5. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its third session.

APPENDIX III

Reports of the Working Groups

I. REPORT OF WORKING GROUP I

A. Organization of work

1. In accordance with Committee decision 2/1, Working Group I was responsible for the elaboration of such provisions as the preamble, principles, objectives and commitments; including financial arrangements and capacity-building.

2. At the 1st meeting of Working Group I, on 14 September 1993, the Chairman made an introductory statement.

3. At the same meeting, the Working Group approved its programme of work for 14 to 24 September 1993. Subsequently it held 11 formal meetings during that period.

4. Working Group I had before it for its consideration a note by the Secretariat entitled "Compilation of government views, statements and drafting proposals" (A/AC.241/12) prepared on the basis of written submissions from Governments and taking into account statements made at the first session of the Committee, held at Nairobi from 24 May to 3 June 1993.

B. Discussion of topics

1. Preamble

5. Working Group I considered this topic at its 1st and 2nd meetings, on 14 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 36 States, including one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

6. At the 2nd meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

2. Principles

7. Working Group I considered this topic at its 2nd and 3rd meetings, on 14 and 15 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 43 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

8. At the 3rd meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

3. Objectives

9. The Working Group discussed this topic at its 3rd meeting, on 15 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 41 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

10. At the 3rd meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

4. Structure and nature of commitments

11. Working Group I discussed this topic at its 3rd, 4th and 6th meetings, from 15 to 17 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 49 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, one on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States and one on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

12. A statement was also made by the representative of an intergovernmental organization.

13. At the 4th meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

5. National action programmes

14. The Working Group considered this topic at its 5th and 6th meetings, on 16 and 17 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 52 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

15. A statement was made by the representative of a United Nations specialized agency. A statement was also made by the representative of a non-governmental organization on behalf of the community of non-governmental organizations.

16. At the 5th meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

6. Subregional action programmes

17. Working Group I considered this topic at its 6th and 7th meetings, on 17 and 20 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 31 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

18. Statements were also made by the representatives of two non-governmental organizations.

19. At the 7th meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

7. Capacity-building

20. The Working Group considered this topic at its 7th and 8th meetings, from 20 to 21 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 40 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

21. A statement was made by the representative of a United Nations specialized agency. A statement was also made by the representative of a non-governmental organization on behalf of the community of non-governmental organizations.

22. At the 8th meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

8. Education and public awareness

23. Working Group I discussed this topic at its 8th meeting, on 21 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 10 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

24. A statement was also made by the representative of a non-governmental organization on behalf of the community of non-governmental organizations.

25. At the 8th meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

9. Financial resources and mechanisms

26. Working Group I discussed this topic at its 9th and 10th meetings, on 21 and 22 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 36 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community and one speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries.

27. A statement was made by the representative of a United Nations specialized agency. A statement was also made by the representative of a non-governmental organization on behalf of the community of non-governmental organizations.

28. At the 10th meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

10. Coordination and cooperation

29. The Working Group considered this topic at its 10th meeting, on 22 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 12 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

30. At the 10th meeting, the Chairman summarized the discussion on the topic.

C. Adoption of report

31. At its 11th meeting, on 23 September, the Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur, Mr. A. Ovchinnikov, introduced the draft report (A/AC.241/WG.I/L.1).

32. At the same meeting, the Working Group adopted the draft report and decided to annex thereto a summary elaborated by the Chairman of Working Group I (see attachment).

ATTACHMENT

Summary by the Chairman of Working Group I*

Preamble

1. There was general consensus for a brief, focused, concise and relevant preamble.

2. The preamble should recall the specific context of desertification, starting from the United Nations Conference on Desertification 1977 to the Earth Summit and its results, in particular Agenda 21, chapter 12, and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Reference was made also to related international instruments, including United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/188.

3. The preamble should not be repetitive of the provisions of the convention.

4. It should not prejudge the negotiations.

5. It should highlight causes and interactions such as economic, demographic and trade factors. In this context poverty and its link to desertification should be stressed.

6. While recognizing the global world-wide impact of desertification as well as its universal character, the specific situation of Africa should also be highlighted.

7. It should be pointed out that activities to be taken at the local, national and international level be geared to sustainable development.

8. In this context, the role of local communities and other agents of development was stressed.

9. Delegations emphasized that the convention should keep pace with evolving circumstances and the preamble adjusted accordingly.

Principles

1. This section is still open for discussion.

2. The history of other negotiations on conventions should be taken into account.

3. The section on principles should not be a reproduction either of the preamble or of the Rio Declaration.

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* Summary by the Chairman, made on his own responsibility, provided for the information of delegations.

Objectives

1. The article on objectives should be brief and precise.

2. The objectives should be of a global nature which would not go into details to be consistent with the international scope of the convention. In this context different proposals have been forwarded.

3. Objectives should take into account chapter 12 of Agenda 21.

4. The secretariat should, in consolidating the various proposals, take into account that the aim of the convention is the promotion of sustainable development through international cooperation.

5. While elaborating the consolidated draft convention, the secretariat should take into account the legal nature of the negotiated text, that it is not a General Assembly resolution or declaration.

Structure and nature of commitments

1. The question of commitments lies at the heart of the negotiation of the convention.

2. It is important to link commitments with the objectives and principles as well as other relevant provisions of the convention.

3. Commitments could be structured, given an order of priority at the local, national, regional, subregional, interregional and international level, with an emphasis on an integrated approach.

4. At the local level the indigenous populations, women, youth, indigenous people, NGOs and other agents of development should play a role in combating desertification.

5. The promotion of knowledge at the local level is important.

6. Commitments should be of a global nature, operational, substantive and clear while remaining realistic.

7. Commitments have to support the aim of combating desertification and alleviating drought in accordance with the mandate of the Committee in Assembly resolution 47/188.

8. Commitments have to be geared to cooperative arrangements in the spirit of common responsibility, partnership and international solidarity forged at the Earth Summit in Rio.

9. The scope of commitments should be consistent with the scope of the convention which is of a universal application, while regional commitments should be left to be dealt with in regional instruments which are an integral part of the convention.

10. There is a need to give structure to commitments, and the alternatives proposed included the categorization of commitments into political and economic ones, or by levels i.e. the international, regional, national and local levels. Here, delegations showed flexibility and gave the secretariat some intellectual latitude for categorizing.

11. There is a need for complementarity between commitments of countries affected by desertification on the one hand and the donor and international organizations on the other hand, in the sense of national commitments going hand in hand with the financial and technical assistance expected from the international community.

12. The structure of the commitments proposed by the OAU and amended by several speakers was considered as a basis for the secretariat's future document.

13. Regarding the format of the commitments, two alternatives were presented, one based on the model of the Climate Change Convention, the other on the model of the Biodiversity Convention and here, again, delegates showed a degree of flexibility for the choices presented.

14. The commitments need to be measurable and quantifiable.

15. Delegations pointed out that follow-up mechanisms for implementation will be necessary. Accordingly, national plans needed to be regularly examined for the purpose of financial assistance and technology transfer.

16. The convention should not overlap with other environmental ones.

National action programmes

1. The national programmes are the keystone of the convention and are the vehicles expressing the commitments by the parties.

2. The national programmes should be consistent with the international nature of the convention, leaving the specific regional matters to be dealt with in the regional instruments.

3. National programmes should be concise and not a mere reproduction of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification or chapter 12 of Agenda 21.

4. The convention is a binding legal instrument.

5. The convention should adopt an integrated approach encompassing all the measures to combat desertification including socio-economic aspects.

6. The drafting and adoption as well as the implementation, monitoring and follow-up should involve all the actors concerned such as the local communities, women, non-governmental organizations, youth and the private and public sectors. It was recalled here that true participation can only take place in a democratic and pluralistic political system.

7. National programmes should provide for cooperative arrangements and partnership and it is therefore important to improve the environment at the

local level by adopting appropriate measures such as incentives. The interaction between the international and national environment was also highlighted.

8. National programmes should address the management of soil conservation and water resources and needs of local populations, e.g. pastoralists as well as land ownership, education, research and public awareness.

9. The elaboration of national programmes to take into account lessons of past experiences and adopt a long-term approach of five years' duration or more. In this context delegations stressed that financial and technical assistance should be of a long-term nature ensuring also the predictability of resources. It was also pointed out that the above-mentioned programmes would need to be reviewed and changed in the light of new scientific knowledge.

10. Delegations pointed to the need for an institutional machinery for implementation and the follow-up of national programmes.

11. It was also stressed that there was a need to establish focal points at appropriate levels or possibly national centres to deal with prevention.

12. National programmes should focus not only on the quality of measures but also on effective and efficient implementation measures.

Subregional action programmes

1. The subregional action programmes cannot replace national programmes but complement them. The absence of the former would constitute the failure of the latter.

2. The coordination and harmonization of subregional efforts was stressed. However, it was noted that the scope of action should be clearly defined and focused to avoid repetition and for that purpose a number of criteria were suggested.

3. It was agreed that the subregional programmes should reflect an integrated approach which is concise, practical and action-oriented. They are crucial for strengthening national capacity.

4. Delegations generally agreed on the strengthening and rationalization of existing subregional institutions. The successful example of the centre of excellence, of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), was cited. Activities of such institutions should be assessed.

5. In regard to the creation of new regional institutions there was a note of caution sounded by various delegations. However, it was felt that an open-minded non-prejudiced approach was necessary to resolve the issue by taking into account special circumstances.

6. The relationship between the subregional action programmes and the regional and subregional economic integration processes was stressed.

Capacity-building

1. Capacity-building is at the cornerstone of efforts to combat desertification. It is a long-term undertaking.

2. Not an end in itself, but linked with the objectives of the convention.

3. National capacity-building should be promoted at every level, especially local. The role of communities, women, youth was stressed.

4. Efforts in this field should address the causes of phenomena, with special regard for indigenous knowledge. They should embrace transfer of ecologically sound technology.

5. Strengthening of national capacity should be supported by the international community.

6. The need to strengthen existing institutions was unanimously recognized. There were divergent opinions on the need for new institutions.

7. The link to education and awareness-raising was stressed.

Education and public awareness

1. The importance of education and public awareness has been recognized and the link in this context to chapter 36 of Agenda 21 was recalled.

2. All parties, whether affected by desertification and drought or not should commit themselves to education and public awareness.

3. National action programmes should provide for concerted action and include awareness campaigns covering all age groups and taking into account all levels of education, including basic, and the problem of illiteracy.

4. Delegations stressed the role of women, youth and non-governmental organizations.

5. The international community and organizations should assist developing countries in this regard.

6. Views were divergent on the issue of establishing new institutions.

Financial resources and mechanisms

1. All delegates recognized the importance of this issue and its complexity. Some established a link between the consideration of this issue and the substance of the convention and its regional arrangements.

2. A large number of delegations pointed out the link to external debt.

3. Affected countries should be able to mobilize their own resources.

4. This should be supported by external resource flows from the international community, on the basis of fair burden-sharing.

5. Sources of funding might be varied and multi-faceted.

6. A comprehensive approach was accepted by all.

7. Some delegations advocated a separate funding mechanism, while others stressed the need to consider the potential of existing mechanisms. All recognized the need to optimize, rationalize and streamline them. The Secretariat was requested to prepare an exhaustive list of existing mechanisms and their activities.

8. On the Global Environment Facility (GEF), it was suggested that it would be wise to wait until the current discussion of its reform was finalized.

9. One delegation proposed a meeting between the representatives of the revised GEF, other financial organizations and the members of the Committee for a detailed dialogue.

10. Priority for Africa should be translated into financial terms.

11. The need for better coordination of external financial flows from all sources was repeatedly stressed and accepted.

12. Suggestions were made that the follow-up to financial commitments in the convention be emphasized.

13. It could be noted with satisfaction that flexibility was shown in all statements on this delicate subject, which might augur well for a satisfactory solution.

Coordination and cooperation

1. Many delegates spoke on the issue under the item on finance, since it is closely linked to financial cooperation.

2. All supported effective international cooperation, since there is room for improvement of relevant mechanisms at the national, subregional, regional and international level.

3. It is important to improve coordination among sources of aid, including NGOs, and avoid past mistakes and duplication.

4. Several speakers stressed the need to translate the solidarity of Rio into reality.

5. The importance of scientific cooperation was recalled, and the need to improve the international economic environment.

6. The role NGOs could play was underlined.

II. Report of Working Group II

A. Organization of work

1. In accordance with Committee decision 2/1 of 13 September 1993, Working Group II was responsible for the elaboration of such provisions as definitions; institutional, administrative, technological and scientific aspects; research, data collection and exchange of information; and procedural arrangements and other legal provisions such as any instruments related to the convention.

2. At its 1st meeting on 14 September 1993, the Chairman made an introductory statement.

3. At the same meeting, the Working Group approved its programme of work for 14 to 24 September. Subsequently it held 8 formal meetings and 2 informal meetings during that period.

4. Working Group II had before it for its consideration a note by the Secretariat entitled "Compilation of Government views, statements and drafting proposals" (A/AC.241/12) prepared on the basis of written submissions from Governments and taking into account statements made at the first substantive session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee held at Nairobi from 24 May to 3 June 1993.

B. Discussion of topics

1. Definitions

5. The Working Group decided to take up consideration of the topic at a later date.

2. Research and development

6. The Working Group considered the topic at its 2nd and 4th meetings, on 15 and 16 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 32 States, including one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community, and one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States.

7. Statements were also made by the representatives of two United Nations specialized agencies and by the representative of an intergovernmental organization.

3. Information collection, analysis and exchange

8. The Working Group considered the topic at its 2nd and 4th meetings, on 15 and 16 September. Statements were made by representatives of 37 States, including one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

9. Statements were also made by the representative of a United Nations specialized agency and by the representative of an intergovernmental organization.

4. Technology transfer and cooperation

10. The Working Group considered the topic at its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 15 and 16 September. Statements were made by representatives of 43 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

11. Statements were also made by the representative of a United Nations specialized agency and by the representatives of two intergovernmental organizations.

5. Institutions

12. The Working Group considered the topic at its 5th and 6th meetings, on 16 and 17 September. Statements were made by representatives of 26 States, including one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community and one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States.

13. The representative of a United Nations specialized agency made a statement.

14. The representative of a non-governmental organization accredited to the Committee made a statement on behalf of the community of non-governmental organizations.

6. Procedures

15. The Working Group considered the topic at its 7th meeting, on 20 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 8 States, including one speaking on behalf of the Group of African States and one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

7. Final clauses

16. The Working Group considered the topic at its 7th meeting, on 20 September. Statements were made by the representatives of 14 States, including one speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Economic Community.

8. Regional instruments

17. The Working Group discussed the topic at two informal meetings.

C. Adoption of the report of the Working Group

18. At its 8th meeting, on 24 September, the Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur, Mr. Frederick E. G. Mallya, introduced and orally revised the draft report (A/AC.241/WG.II/L.1).

19. At the same meeting, the Working Group adopted the draft report as orally revised, and decided to annex thereto a summary elaborated by the Chairman of Working Group II (see attachment).

ATTACHMENT

Summary by the Chairman of Working Group II*

The purpose of this summary is to provide a brief report of the main ideas which were put forward during the discussions in Working Group II. (The changes to texts in document A/AC.241/12 have been noted by the secretariat. They are not referred to in this summary.)

Section One. Chapter IV (A/AC.241/12, paras. 41-47)

Definitions

Entrusted with the task of seeking a solution to the problems of definition arising in respect of the convention on desertification, the Working Group came out in favour of using, for the purposes of its current discussion, the definition of desertification adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in paragraph 12.2 of Agenda 21: "Desertification is land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities".

The Group decided to defer consideration of definitions until a later stage, when discussions in other fields would make it possible to pinpoint the terms that are to be defined.

The Group requested the Secretariat to facilitate the task of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee by compiling a list of the definitions of key terms used in the convention which have already been adopted in other United Nations bodies.

Section Two. Chapter III.A (A/AC.241/12, paras. 79-83)

Research and development

The Working Group then took up the agenda item entitled "Research and development" on the afternoon of 14 September.

The lively debate centred on a careful reading of chapter III.A. This chapter was regarded as a useful basis for discussion. However, the suggestions made showed that the text could be improved, clarified and condensed. It was felt that it might be desirable to stick to general principles, leaving the diverse needs of countries, subregions and regions with very different characteristics to be dealt with in individual documents.

The purpose of the following pages is to provide guidance for the preparation of a draft convention, highlighting some of the ideas expressed

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* Summary by the Chairman, made on her own behalf, for the information of delegations.

during an exchange of views consisting of many statements. This brief summary should be read in conjunction with the communications which some delegations have transmitted to the Secretariat.

General comments

On the question of the directions of research, several delegations noted that the task would be easier if:

A distinction was made between natural phenomena over which man had little control (drought) and phenomena that were reversible through appropriate action (desertification);

There was recognition of the value to accord priority to areas where desertification was more easily reversed;

The scope of the convention was defined, and it was made clear whether the convention should deal only with control of desertification or with deserts as well;

It was decided whether the main objective was to prevent desertification or whether it was also to rehabilitate desert regions.

Research and development priorities

The Working Group agreed, in respect of research and development priorities in the area of desertification, that it was clearly necessary to improve knowledge of the climatic, physical and technical causes of the phenomenon but that research on the socio-economic causes which had been somewhat neglected so far, must be given increasing weight in the work undertaken because of their important role in the process.

Among the socio-economic causes of desertification which should be studied in greater depth, the delegates mentioned the following: historical, ethnological, sociological and economic causes, causes originating in land tenure systems, agrarian systems, the respective roles of the State and civilian society, etc.

The links between poverty and desertification must be taken into account. The same applied, in fragile areas, to the diversification of employment as an alternative to agriculture, which could relieve pressure on the environment.

Everything would seem to have priority in research and yet a hierarchy of priorities had to be established in order to make the best possible use of the human and financial resources available. Some criteria for establishing these priorities were mentioned by various speakers; it was felt that national plans and priorities should play an essential role. Other useful criteria included the following: careful definition of the objective to be attained (the target); local capacity for execution and implementation; clearly formulated request, particularly on the part of the producers, the main users of research findings; the possibility of achieving lasting results that would withstand the test of time; the time-frame established, i.e., short or long-term.

Strengthening of local capacities for research and development

The Working Group attached great importance to the strengthening of local research and development capacities in efforts to combat desertification: training, support for national and regional research and development institutions and for extension services, establishment of databases meeting specific needs, and implementation of multidisciplinary methods, with the support of the developed countries.

Measures for the exchange and coordination of research and development

While, in the view of the Working Group, exchanges of information at the national, regional and international levels could greatly increase the value of research and development, great care needed to be taken in establishing new research instruments, whether institutions, international networks of research centres or other mechanisms, without a full review of the resources already available and the priority needs to be met.

The Working Group asked the Secretariat to draw up a list of institutions responsible for conducting research into desertification. It would also be useful to have a complete inventory of the scientific experience gathered in this area.

The Group recommended the wide dissemination of information on activities undertaken by the numerous operational research agencies, such as those forming part of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Measures to improve the utilization and coordination of the activity of those agencies and to strengthen their powers of intervention were matters of priority.

Section Two. Chapter III.B (A/AC.241/12, paras. 84-87)

Information collection, analysis and exchange

The Working Group took up the agenda item entitled "Information collection, analysis and exchange" at its afternoon meeting on 14 September.

The discussions included a close reading of chapter III.B, which was generally found to be over-ambitious. Most representatives took a realistic approach and acknowledged that the collection, analysis and exchange of information relating to desertification should be improved but that the goals should be tailored to actual possibilities and that greater selectivity and efficiency were needed if knowledge in that area was to be increased.

A concise summary of the debate is given below.

Procedure

Should more information be collected, analysed and exchanged? It was very tempting, but in view of the immense needs to be met and the cost of the undertaking, many representatives suggested that the procedure should be guided by a certain number of questions: what information was required? Who should collect it? To what end? Over what period? How should it be retrieved once it

has been collected? How should it be conveyed to the end-users, the "clients"? To answer those questions, several criteria for selection were cited, namely, submission of a clearly formulated request; solution of a specific problem; enhancement of social and economic knowledge; area where there was great uncertainty; careful cost-benefit analysis; and possible use at a well identified local level.

In any case, as one representative pointed out, it was important to remember that the collection, analysis and exchange of information was a means and not an end in itself.

However, since the countries affected by desertification needed tools, the Working Group recommended that the Panel of Experts should be requested to work on the key variables and the indicators conducive to an enhancement of the analysis and follow-up of the phenomenon of desertification, taking due account of the needs of different categories of users. It asked the Secretariat to transmit its request to the Committee's Executive Secretary who agreed to the request.

Modalities

The Working Group recommended making use of existing international institutions and operative information exchange networks, thus avoiding redundancy and overlap in initiatives and institutions.

It also recommended support for the efforts of developing countries, their collection and analysis capacities and certain South-South trade initiatives.

Section Two. Chapter III.C (A/AC.241/12, paras. 88-94)

Technology transfer and cooperation

On 15 September, at its morning meeting, the Working Group took up the agenda item entitled "Technology transfer and cooperation".

The discussion included a careful reading of chapter III.C, which was considered to be a good basis for discussion.

The many constructive statements demonstrated an awareness of the complex nature of technology transfers and an increasingly realistic attitude to the efforts necessary to make optimal use of those transfers.

As with the previous agenda items, the following paragraphs are not intended to give an exhaustive account of the discussion but merely to highlight certain important ideas expressed by the Working Group.

Transfer and acquisition of technology

The Working Group agreed that the question of the transfer and acquisition of technology was very important. Cooperation in that area could help alleviate, even resolve problems of arid zones.

The term "transfer", however, appears inappropriate to the goals which have been set. It would be preferable to use another concept reflecting the joint efforts which the developed and developing countries should undertake to develop methods of combating desertification and to adapt these methods to local and diverse needs. The term "technical cooperation" would seem to convey these objectives somewhat better.

The Group agreed that the value of traditional technologies has been underestimated and neglected. These methods do in fact reveal a long-established and sophisticated knowledge and know-how, which is well adapted to local conditions. It would make sense to put these methods to the best possible use by employing them in conjunction, if possible, with modern methods appropriate to the specific needs.

The effects of the technologies employed should be carefully monitored in all fields - technical, social, economic and environmental, with a view to correcting any adverse consequences that may arise and to utilizing their positive results. Efforts to assess the results obtained should be applied both to local, traditional technologies and to modern technologies.

The acquisition of the best available technologies for combating desertification poses serious problems for developing countries. They need assistance in identifying available sources and gaining access to the already considerable body of knowledge that has been gathered.

In view of these considerations, certain specific proposals have been put forward as a basis for the texts to be included in the convention. It was agreed that the convention should:

- Include machinery to facilitate the transfer of local, traditional technologies and their dissemination within the framework of South-South cooperation, thus promoting the joint use of old and new methods;

- Refer to the measures necessary to facilitate transfers of technology to the developing countries;

- Mention the key role that international organizations, such as UNEP, FAO, UNESCO, etc., could play in those fields;

- Include a financial mechanism to facilitate technology transfers, especially South-South transfers.

Some delegations commented, on the other hand, that it was unnecessary for the convention to include a detailed list of activities relating to technology transfer and cooperation. The techniques for combating desertification were very numerous and highly diversified. They applied, for example, to water and soil management, agriculture, grazing, the use of new energy sources and energy saving, the restoration of biodiversity, the introduction of new crops, methods of monitoring the environment. In view of the apparent difficulty, it might, perhaps, be sufficient to refer, in the body of the convention, to needs of a general order and to leave it to the regional documents to be more precise about the specific needs of very different countries and regions.

The private sector could also participate usefully in the exchange of technologies, by adapting the products and services it offered.

Support and strengthening of endogenous capacities of developing countries

The Working Group stressed that efforts would need to be made to increase knowledge and autonomous skills in the developing countries at all levels of society, including especially among rural communities and farmers.

Some specific recommendations were put forward.

The convention should stipulate, for example, the steps to be taken to increase knowledge and know-how in the developing countries. Several fields of intervention were cited as means of moving towards those goals: training, recycling, improvement of the capacity to evaluate local technologies and techniques used from the technical, social, economic and ecological standpoints, research, capacity to promote new sources of employment in vulnerable agricultural zones, etc.

The representatives laid great stress on popular participation, without which the effort to combat desertification could not be effective. Scientists and decision-makers should work to disseminate knowledge among the people in order to awaken them to ecological risks and help them to make good use of the most appropriate techniques, whether traditional or modern. Basic education was part of the effort to combat desertification.

An attempt should be made to make greater use than hitherto of NGOs, and of local, national and regional expertise and to improve developing country institutions.

Lack of the skills needed to organize databases appropriate to the problems to be solved, to manage that information dynamically, to build networks, and connect specialized institutions in the field of desertification at the national, regional and international levels were handicaps that could be gradually mitigated by outside support.

Institutional aspects

Most of the representatives who spoke on the advisability of creating a new international body responsible for facilitating transfers of technology in connection with the effort to combat desertification and drought felt that such an initiative was not desirable. They expressed a preference for improving coordination among the existing bodies mandated in that connection, in particular the members of CGIAR. Some representatives emphasized that the multilateral banks could play a useful role in that area.

Some warned about the risks of duplication and overlapping between the convention on desertification and existing conventions and agreements in related fields (climate, biodiversity, etc.) with a view to avoiding the dispersion of effort and resources.

Desertification, a global problem

Several representatives noted, at the beginning of the discussion of the agenda item, that desertification affected not only developing countries but also others, such as Australia, the United States and the countries of the Mediterranean basin.

Section Three. Chapter I.A, B, C, D (A/AC.241/12, paras. 113-126)

Institutional and procedural arrangements

The Working Group proceeded to read carefully the provisions concerning institutional and procedural arrangements. The discussion of this topic brought out some converging and diverging views.

It has not been thought useful to identify in this summary the delegations or agencies making the statements. The conference secretariat is in a position to do this.

General remarks

Before entering into the heart of the discussion, representatives made a number of general comments, including the following:

- An international convention with a scope as wide as that of the convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification must include institutional and procedural arrangements in order to be implemented effectively;

- In devising such arrangements and procedures, it would be advisable to look to other conventions for guidance;

- However, without having a clear idea of the convention's content and specific attributions, it would be very difficult to enter into the details of the institutional arrangements needed to implement it;

- In order to bring the convention into effect, it was recommended that the widest possible use should be made of institutions and bodies concerned with desertification. Coordination with those bodies and institutions should be a constant preoccupation;

- Economy in the operation of the institutions responsible for implementing the convention should also be a priority objective, so that the greatest possible amount of resources could be used for executing programmes to combat desertification. It might even be asked whether the convention really needed its own set of institutions. In order to decide on that point, it would be appropriate to start at once on an exhaustive inventory of bodies already active in combating desertification.

After these general remarks, the Working Group proceeded to consider the institutions suggested in document A/AC.241/12.

The conference of the parties

As a whole, the Working Group agreed that the implementation of the convention would entail establishing a standing conference of the parties.

It was generally held that the conference of the parties should be the only decision-making body for implementing the convention. The conference's functions should be carefully specified. Its rules of procedure and financial regulations should be adopted by consensus.

Overall, the Working Group felt that the conference of the parties should decide on the frequency of its meetings - provided that the ad hoc secretariat convened it not later than one year after the convention's entry into force. If circumstances so justified, the conference of the parties should be able to meet in extraordinary session.

Representatives evinced differing views on the usefulness of a bureau of the conference of the parties. Some thought it would be preferable for the conference itself to decide that matter. Others felt that a bureau comprising at least a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur would be essential for the smooth functioning of the conference. They advocated a balanced geographical composition for the bureau and recommended that it should meet at least once a year to prepare the deliberations of the conference of the parties.

It was proposed that some thought should be given to a venue for the first conference of the parties but that no mention of that issue should be made in the convention.

Should provision be made for separate conferences of the parties for the regional instruments? The subject seemed a delicate one and views differed. It was proposed that consideration of that question should be postponed to a later stage.

Secretariat

A large number of representatives said that a permanent secretariat would be needed to help with the implementation of the convention. It would be for the conference of the parties to determine its size in the light of the sessions it thought it would have to service; accordingly, there was no need to list the secretariat's functions in detail in the convention. The Group agreed that the secretariat's functions should be confined exclusively to conference servicing and administration.

The Group also agreed that the permanent secretariat should cooperate closely with the secretariats of related conventions and with other United Nations bodies involved with combating desertification and mitigating drought.

Subsidiary bodies

The Working Group did not reach agreement on the possible establishment of subsidiary bodies within the framework of the convention.

Many delegations, most - but not all - of which represented developed countries, thought it would be preferable to let the conference of the parties make whatever arrangements it considered necessary regarding subsidiary bodies to assist in implementing the convention. They did not consider it appropriate to mention such subsidiary bodies in the convention.

Many delegations, generally those of the developing countries, thought that the convention should provide for the establishment of the scientific and technological council mentioned in document A/AC.241/12. Several of them also supported the establishment of an evaluation and monitoring centre. The conference of the parties should be able to create other subsidiary organs if necessary.

Interim arrangements

The Working Group agreed that the Negotiating Committee should authorize the ad hoc secretariat to continue to perform its duties during the interim period.

Financing

Paragraph 114, which dealt with the financial responsibilities of the parties to the convention, was acceptable to a significant number of delegations.

Nevertheless, certain representatives of developing countries expressed concern, saying that their countries might have difficulty in making financial contributions for the institutions of the convention. They thought that those institutions should be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations though without ruling out the possibility of extrabudgetary contributions.

Procedures and final clauses

Institutions

A consensus emerged regarding the need to create the usual institutions for that type of convention, in other words, a conference of the parties and a secretariat. The conference of the parties would be the decision-making body, while the secretariat's responsibilities would be purely administrative. In the view of some delegations, the composition of the bureau of the conference of the parties should be specified in the convention, while others thought that that question should be left to the conference of the parties. Several delegations stressed that it was important for the convention to have its own institutions. They were opposed to having the convention use existing organizations, which might not give desertification the necessary attention.

Representatives thought that it would be premature to try to determine the size of the future secretariat. It should be based on actual requirements.

Two major lines of thought emerged on the subject of subsidiary bodies. Several representatives expressed the belief that the convention should establish a scientific and technological council and a monitoring centre because

there was an obvious need for those two institutions. Others thought it best to leave the task of establishing any necessary institutions to the conference of the parties.

Procedures and final clauses

Several delegations said that it was impossible to decide on the procedural questions and final clauses when the substantive provisions of the convention were not known. Their remarks were therefore preliminary.

With respect to amendments, some said that it was important to make every effort to adopt amendments by consensus. The question of the majority required in the event of a vote was not settled, although several representatives expressed a preference for a two-thirds majority.

Opinions were divided with respect to dispute settlement. Some delegations expressed a preference for a very short provision, while others thought it best to have a more elaborate one, as in the case of the biodiversity convention.

Some delegations said that the convention should provide that the conference of the parties should adopt its rules of procedure and financial rules by consensus.

With respect to ratification, several said that the text submitted by the Organization of African Unity's group of experts constituted a good basis for discussion. Some delegations said that the convention should come into effect when 30 ratifications had been deposited, as in the case of the biodiversity convention, so that desertification could be tackled without delay.

Opinions were divided as to whether reservations to the convention should be allowed. Some delegations thought that they should not, in keeping with the recent trend, while others said that it was impossible to reach a decision on that subject until the substantive provisions were known. Opinions were also divided as to the necessary delay before withdrawal would become effective, with some favouring two years and others, three.

Protocols and annexes

The convention should be simple, clear, practical, precise, directive and operational. It should enable the establishment of universal principles. Progress on negotiating the convention should not be obstructed by talks on the regional instruments.

Some representatives thought that if the convention had the attributes listed in the preceding paragraph, there might be no need for regional instruments. If there was, it would become apparent as negotiations on the convention progressed.

A significant number of representatives favoured regional instruments. Most of them said that the best approach would be to incorporate the regional instruments into the convention as annexes. That approach would also be best in terms of facilitating the Committee's work. However, the idea was also expressed that substance was more important than form and that the Committee had

whatever leeway it allowed itself. If there was agreement on that point, either annexes or protocols could meet the proposed objectives.

Assuming that the idea of regional instruments were to be adopted, there remained the question of how many. A considerable number favoured an instrument for Africa, and there was marked support for the idea of adopting the convention and the instrument for Africa simultaneously in June 1994. The task of preparing the instrument for Africa should, it seemed, be entrusted to Working Group II. The representatives from Latin America and Asia and the representative of the European Communities stated that the specific needs of their regions should be taken into account. They hoped that if an instrument for Africa were included, instruments would also be included for their regions.

There were no clear answers to a number of questions: whether all the regional instruments should be adopted simultaneously, how soon they should be elaborated and whether all of the parties to the convention should sign them. It was suggested that, at its next session, the Committee should consider a specific programme of work and, if applicable, a model regional instrument.

The question of the resources required to elaborate the regional instruments was raised. The countries of the various regions (except Africa) should contribute funds if they were in a position to do so.